
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Agency: 305

Audit Report: 2003 Statewide Accountability Report

Finding Number: 03-35

Finding: The Washington Department of Veterans' Affairs (WDVA) does not have sufficient internal controls over its pharmaceutical inventory to prevent or detect misappropriation or loss.

Resolution/Status: The Department has taken the following corrective actions:

In November 2003, the Pharmacy Manager realigned the responsibilities for the ordering and receiving of drugs. The Pharmacy Assistant now orders pharmaceuticals and the Pharmacy Technicians receive and account for the products, creating a clear separation of duties. The pharmacy staples a copy of the pharmaceutical order to the invoice upon receipt. The order and invoice are compared to ensure they match.

The Department established random/periodic management monitoring for compliance. For the non-controlled substances, the Department is conducting random product checks comparing purchase totals, dispensed totals and residual in stock. The Pharmacy Manager investigates any variance and implements the necessary corrective action. Findings are reviewed with facility administration on a regular basis. Additionally, the Department developed policies and procedures to ensure appropriate counts and verification.

The Department performs a final count of unusable drugs to be sent for destruction and reconciles those counts to the totals on the return log. To ensure the unused drugs are returned to the pharmacy for destruction, they are returned with a "Medication Destroyed" form. A "Controlled Substance Destruction Log" form is completed when the drugs are put in the holding cabinet. The pharmacy technician prepares the drugs to be sent for destruction and signs as verification of the information. This is reviewed and signed by a pharmacist prior to sending the drugs for destruction. Additionally, the Department instituted documentation verifying that the firm doing the destruction signs for and validates the type and amount of drugs being destroyed.

In November 2003, pharmacy procedures were updated to include the use of the "Medication Destroyed" form. This form is signed by the nurse returning the drugs and the pharmacist receiving the drugs to verify that the document correctly reflects the returned substances to the pharmacy.

In November 2003, staff was instructed to use locks in place for the pharmacy main door and cabinet for controlled substances. The main door is self-closing and equipped with both a key and numeric push button lock. The locks are under the control of the pharmacists. Management performs random/periodic checks to ensure proper security procedures are maintained. In January 2004, a monitored alarm system was installed for the pharmacy.

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